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Baghdad, Iraq

July 23, 2004

U.S. builds new military bases for Iraqis, provides foundation for new nation

By Mitch Frazier
U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers
Gulf Region Division

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Mud huts and bomb-broken buildings dot the sandy barren horizon near Mosul, Iraq. As in much of the country, decades of war have left a wake of rubble and looted buildings at the former Al Kasik Iraqi Army Base, here.

The base, which sat tattered and empty for more than a decade, stood as only a shell of concrete, broken tile floors and cracked plaster.

Yugoslavian contractors abandoned the base's partially constructed barracks, dining facilities and motor pools in 1991 as tensions in the area skyrocketed in the days before Operation

Desert Storm. As the contractors and the Iraqi Army fled, the unfinished infrastructure sat idle, serving as a stockpile of wiring, tile and building materials that would be pillaged months later after hostilities in the area ceased.

Today, the broken floors have been replaced, cracked plaster has been patched and new electrical wiring brings light to what has been dark for so long.

The renovation and construction is part of a \$43 million reconstruction project managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that will create barracks space, motor pools, shopping exchanges, dining facilities and firing ranges for nearly 11,000 new Iraqi army soldiers.

"We are essentially building a city," said Mike Cirian, the

Corps' top engineering construction manager for the northern half of the country. "When it is complete in September, this will be a complete city with its own water and waste-water treatment and power generation and will help bolster the country's security."

Cirian, a civil engineer and father of three from Madison, Wis., deployed to Iraq in late April to spearhead the reconstruction efforts. Since then, 12- to 16-hour days are the norm, managing the construction and rehabilitation of two new Iraqi army bases in the north and a host of other infrastructure-improvement projects designed to give Iraq what Cirian calls "a new start."

"This is brand new to them," he said. "Before (the multina-

tional force) arrived, these people were shepherds. They knew nothing about construction nor were they equipped to do the work."

Hammers fashioned from scrap steel and wood and drills made from hand-bent rebar were the only "tools" onsite when Corps project managers and engineers arrived to the base in February. But the Corps, along with its contractor Shaw Environmental Infrastructure based in Dubai, was adamant about employing local Iraqis in the construction.

"This is their country, and we need to help them learn skills they need to be successful and to have a hand in rebuilding their country," he said. "We also need to give them the infrastructure they need for

their nation's security."

While multi-story barracks construction and elaborate water-treatment facilities were far from the mud huts and water buckets traditionally used by the locals, the Corps and its contractor have been able to construct the facilities on schedule and, at the same time, teach hundreds of Iraqis basic construction skills.

"It is a challenge at times," said Tom Dillon, the vice president of Shaw's Dubai operations, who represents the contractor onsite. "We are investing heavily in the local community, and we have created a real sense of pride for the local workforce. "That pride has also greatly helped us maintain our security."

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ING academy graduates first basic training class

**Story and photo by
Sgt. Roland G. Walters**
196th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

TIKRIT, Iraq — The 1st Infantry Division hosted a ceremony July 10 for the first class of Iraqi National Guard soldiers to graduate from the ING Training Academy here.

The 309 graduates completed the 20-day course taught by multinational force and Iraqi instructors. In the past, training was done "in house" by the sep-

arate ING battalions.

Maj. Gen. John R. S. Batiste, the 1st Infantry Division commander, told the students that the "graduation is a major milestone in your life and for the sovereignty of Iraq."

The course is modeled after the U.S. Army's basic training.

ING recruits are instructed on wear of the uniform, military customs and courtesies, drill and ceremony and basic rifle marksmanship, said Maj. Scot R. Bemis, the

ING Training Academy commandant.

However, instruction is based on the Iraqi Army's marching, saluting and even weapons familiarization on the AK-47, he said.

Recruits are also taught first aid, personnel and vehicle search as well as individual movement techniques.

The soldiers are recruited by separate battalions throughout the Big Red One's area of responsibility. Each battalion is allocated slots in each class.



An Iraqi National Guard recruit demonstrates individual-movement techniques while an ING drill instructor shouts words of encouragement July 6 at the ING Training Academy in Tikrit, Iraq.

Training developed to help potential captives

By Donna Miles
American Forces
Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department is taking a hard look at the way it trains service members to avoid capture and, if they do fall into enemy hands, how to handle themselves.

A new “core captivity curriculum,” expected to be completed this summer, is designed to update training currently being provided to service members whose jobs put them at the highest risk of being captured, Air Force Col. Mark Bracich, the director of policy, doctrine and training for the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency at Fort Belvoir, Va., told the American Forces Press Service.

Bracich said the curriculum is being developed jointly by the services for incorporation into

training offered at the services’ survival, evasion, resistance and escape schools. If validated, key concepts of the new curriculum are expected to be introduced into training for all service members beginning with their initial military training, he said.

The new curriculum is designed to address the “asymmetric” modern-day battlefield — one without clear-cut front lines or clear distinctions between friend and foe.

It also considers peacekeeping, humanitarian and other non-combat missions today’s military carries out. In these situations, Bracich said, service members are as likely to be taken hostage by a splinter group as they are to be taken prisoner of war by an enemy army.

As the battlefield has changed, so, too, have traditional notions about who is most likely to be captured, Bracich acknowl-

edged. For example, during the first days of Operation Iraqi Freedom, it wasn’t combat troops who became the first U.S. prisoners of war but, rather, combat-support soldiers from the Army Reserve’s 507th Maintenance Company.

“More people are being put into more levels of risk in more environments,” Bracich said. “It raises the question: are we doing the right thing for the right people at the right time? This is something we’re working with the services to figure out.”

Army Chief Warrant Officer Dave Williams, whose AH-64D Longbow Apache helicopter was shot down over Iraq in March 2003, said his 21 days of captivity reinforced the need for additional training for all service members, regardless of their job specialty.

“When you go into a situation like Iraq, there are no friendly

lines,” Williams said. “Everybody is at high risk of capture, regardless of your (military occupational specialty).”

As a former member of the Army’s 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, Williams had gone through the Army’s three-week Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape School at Fort Bragg, N.C., in 1997.

The course, he said, gave him the tools he needed to evade capture as long as possible, along with his copilot, Chief Warrant Officer Ronald Young Jr. Once they were captured and taken to the Al Rashid prison in Baghdad, Williams said, the course helped him endure the hardships of captivity and, as the senior U.S. prisoner, help his fellow soldiers.

Williams said he established a chain of command and “developed a fellowship with the other prisoners,” who were Young and

five soldiers from the 507th Maintenance Company. Their captivity, he said, included torture and psychological abuse.

Unlike Williams, the 507th Maintenance Company soldiers had no training in what to expect or how to behave in a prisoner-of-war situation, he said. Their only training — and the only training currently provided to the vast majority of service members — was limited to a briefing on the Code of Conduct during basic training.

Army Pfc. Patrick Miller, one of the 507th captives, admitted that he, like most service members who receive this training, didn’t expect to ever have much use for it. But not surprisingly, Miller has since become a big advocate of more training in how to handle oneself if captured. “Everybody needs it,” he said.

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New Baghdad gas station

First new station in district since 1967

Story and photo by
Spc. Jan Critchfield
122nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Work on a new gas station to be built on Baghdad University property given to the Ministry of Oil kicked off July 11. It will be only the sixth gas station in the Karadah district of Baghdad, which is home to a million people.

“It’ll be the first gas station that’s been built in Karadah since 1967,” said Col. Kendall Penn, the commander of 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment, a part of the 1st Cavalry Division’s 3rd Brigade Combat Team in Central Baghdad. “It will increase by 20 percent the amount of gas available to the citi-

zens of Karadah.”

The number of vehicles in Baghdad drastically increased after the end of major combat operations last year, and so has the demand for fuel.

“The initial roadblock was finding a piece of land. Baghdad University was gracious enough to donate land here on the campus. We’ve since gotten the Ministry of Oil to donate other parcels of land in Karadah,” Penn said.

Three additional gas-station projects are planned for the Karadah area, continuing Karadah District Council efforts to improve fuel distribution in the area.

“[These projects] will definitely help improve the economy,” Penn said, “It gives people more ability to travel to and from their places of work.”

Brig. Gen. Sandy Davidson, the Multi-National Force-Iraq director of Civil Military Operations, provided the \$300,000 needed to build the station from a pool of commander’s emergency relief funds at his disposal.

“We would like to build seven,” said Maj. Danny Hassig, the leader of a 478th Civil Affairs Team assigned to the 153rd’s 1st Battalion. The 478th CA Team works with the Karadah District Council to organize projects such as the gas station currently under-way.

“Fuel distribution and infrastructure in Baghdad is a priority, so hopefully we’ll be able to get those funded as well,” Hassig said.

“Everyone understands the need for fuel, and everyone understands the frustration of sitting in a fuel line,” he said. “It’s an excellent way to show the local community that the new government is working hard to meet their needs.”



Brig. Gen. Sandy Davidson, the Multi-National Force-Iraq director of Civil Military Operations, packs concrete into a column for a new gas station in Baghdad’s Karadah district.

DoD creates Office of Detainee Affairs

By Samantha L. Quigley
American Forces
Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department is changing the way it handles detainee issues and has created a new internal organization to deal with Red Cross reports, a senior official said in the Pentagon July 16.

Officials have created an Office of Detainee Affairs that will be responsible for strategy development and policy recommendations, Principal Deputy Undersecretary for Policy C. Ryan Henry announced in a news briefing.

An as-yet-unnamed deputy assistant secretary who will report to the undersecretary for policy will head the office. The new deputy will chair a joint committee composed of the undersecretary for intelligence and representatives from the Joint Staff, the Office of General Counsel, the Department of the Army and others who might be involved in detainee affairs.

The new office also will handle reports from the International Committee of the Red Cross, Henry said.

“Normally, in the past, ... they’ve been left at the field level,” he said. Now, such reports will be forwarded to the deputy assistant

secretary for detainee affairs, who, in turn, will convene the joint committee to review those reports and then advise Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld for his guidance, Henry said.

“The deputy assistant secretary and the Office of Detainee Affairs will be the single focal point in communicating with the ICRC on DoD’s behalf,” he said.

Henry said steps have been taken to maintain the ICRC’s confidential nature. Without that confidentiality, free-flowing information and the collegial environment that exists between the ICRC and local commanders could be stifled, he explained.

In trying to keep Congress in the loop, the department has made parts of some ICRC reports available to House and Senate members.

“This is part of an ongoing effort that the secretary has directed in keeping the congressional members informed and so they can effectively have their oversight function,” Henry said.

Asked if the creation of the Office of Detainee Affairs and other changes constituted an admission by Rumsfeld and the department that detainee operations have been handled poorly, Henry replied that it was “part of an ongoing effort by a learning organization.”

46K take eArmyU courses online

By Courtney Hickson
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — More than 46,000 Soldiers have been able to continue their education by taking online classes through eArmyU, including many of the Soldiers deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Army launched eArmyU in 2001 to offer eligible enlisted Soldiers the opportunity to work toward a college degree or certificate anytime, anywhere.

Soldiers who have been deployed continue to be able to work on their degrees from Afghanistan and Iraq. Of the 6,984 eArmyU Soldiers deployed in those theaters, 2,098 are now enrolled in eArmyU classes.

eArmyU is an educational opportunity for enlisted Soldiers to earn degrees online from one of 29 educational institutions.

Soldiers can earn certificates, associate's, bachelor's or master's degrees in 146 degree and certificate programs. The courses are Web based and allow Soldiers to take classes at any time, no matter where their location. In addition, Soldiers can get full tuition reimbursement and a laptop to take the classes with, which becomes their own at the end of the program.

As of June 11 there have been 729 degrees conferred and 122,763 course enrollments. These numbers are up from January 2003 when there were more than 30,500 Soldiers taking classes around the world. The most popular eArmyU degrees are business followed by criminal justice, according to Director of eArmyU Dian Stoskopf. Currently, 72 percent of Soldiers participating are enrolled in associate-level programs, 21.1 percent are signed up for bachelor's programs, 1.7 percent are signed up for master's pro-

grams and 5 percent are signed up for certificate programs.

Kelsey also said Soldiers can take their laptops with them if they are transferred and with eArmyU they can continue their educational experience.

"It really is anytime, anyplace," she said.

A number of degrees and programs are available through eArmyU, including associate's degrees, a bachelors of arts, a bachelors of science and various master's degrees. They range from an associate's degree in criminal justice to a bachelor's of science in professional aeronautics to a master's degree in business administration.

First Sgt. Dexter Dean, from Fort Benning, has been in eArmyU for about two years and has six more classes until he completes his associate's degree in criminal justice.

"So far, it's been a good experience," he said.

Dean also said eArmyU is easy if a Soldier has a little computer literacy and can follow a syllabus. While he has not had to transfer bases while enrolled in eArmyU, he said there should be no problems for Soldiers who may.

Sgt. Erick Espinosa, from Fort Wainwright, Alaska, said his experience with eArmyU has also been positive. Espinosa has been taking classes since February 2003 and needs only a few more classes to complete his associate's degree in criminal justice. He said some of it depends on the teachers, also, and how quickly they respond but the majority has been good.

He said the biggest challenge he faced was sitting down and doing the class work while juggling his Army work.

"It is a great program; you get a free education and laptop if you do your work," he said.

Postal initiative to speed absentee ballots to Soldiers

By John Runyan
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — A new labeling system at the U.S. Postal Service is designed to expedite absentee ballots to Soldiers deployed around the world.

USPS employees will contact 3,000 county election officials all over the country to coordinate mailing of overseas absentee ballots. Once the blank local ballots are printed, they will be sent by local post offices via overnight Express Mail to San Francisco, Miami and New York, the three military gateways.

USPS will mail successive groups of ballots to military gateways daily and will determine the number of ballots per location at the gateways. Then the ballots will be sorted by destination and placed in containers specially marked for visibility and priority.

DoD's Military Postal System will then give the ballots priority handling for delivery overseas, will ensure they receive a proper, legible postmark upon return and will place them in easily identifiable containers. The ballots will then receive priority processing for delivery back to county election officials.

"If anything is moving, (the ballots) will be moving as well," said Mark DeDomenic, the assistant deputy director at the Military Postal Service Agency.

The Army is asking that all Soldiers be registered to vote absentee by Aug. 15, said Jim Davis, the Army's voting action officer. That way they should receive their ballots sometime in September and can have them sent out by the Oct. 11 deadline.

Davis said both of these deadlines are designed for Soldiers in the theater of operations and he encouraged all Soldiers to register and vote, even if they miss the

deadlines. Most states will accept absentee ballots until the close of business on election day, Nov. 2, but the Oct. 11 deadline should ensure all ballots will arrive in time to be counted.

Each state has specified deadlines for receipt of absentee ballots. For example, absentee ballots for Louisiana must be in no later than the day of the election while New York requires that the ballots are postmarked by the day before the election. North Carolina ballots must be in by 5 p.m. the day before the election and Pennsylvania absentee ballots must arrive by 5 p.m. on the Friday before the election.

If those Soldiers, family or DA civilians are located outside the United States send in their request for an absentee ballot in sufficient time and didn't receive their

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Center-South switch

Submitted by Multi-National
Division Center-South
Public Information Office

CAMP BABYLON, Iraq — Polish Army Maj. Gen. Andrzej Ekiert took command of the Multi-National Division Center-South here Sunday.

Ekiert replaced Maj Gen Mieczyslaw Bieniek, who discussed some of the more than 1,200 projects totaling more than \$41 million MND-CS has undertaken. The projects include rebuilding schools and hospitals, support of agriculture and water purification plants.

In his remarks, Ekiert said that the most important tasks for MND-CS are to help and support the Iraqi government and Iraqi people in their aspirations to ensure security, stabilization and rebuilding of a free and democratic Iraq.

Soldiers from all the MND-CS troop-contributing nations participated in the ceremony. Among the guests at the ceremony where the Multi-National Forces-Iraq commander, Gen. George Casey; Polish Prime Minister Marek Belka; Iraqi Minister of Defense Hazim Al-Shaalan; Polish Minister of Defense Jerzy Szmajdzinski; the Multinational Corps-Iraq commander, Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, and the chief of Defense of the Republic of Iraq, Gen. Amer Bakir Al-Hashimi.

MND-CS is headed by the Polish and has had contingents from a variety of countries under its command, including Bulgaria, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, the Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Thailand and Ukraine.



Sgt. Jose M. Hernandez, U.S. Army

Polish MPs praised

Maj. Gen. Mieczyslaw Bieniek, the then-commander of Multi-National Division Center-South, salutes troops during a Polish military police celebration at Camp Babylon, Iraq, June 12. MPs celebrated their origins and were recognized for their outstanding performance during their deployment to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

PERSPECTIVES

Coping with combat stress

Battle fatigue.
War neurosis.
Shell shock.

These colorful names from earlier wars all refer to the condition that today we call "combat stress."

Combat stress refers to the emotional, mental and behavioral effects that come as a result of intense armed conflict and from the many horrors that surround it – being terrified by the risk of losing one's own life or being permanently injured, seeing friends hurt or killed, viewing disfigured and dead bodies of the enemy and innocent civilians, ear-shattering noises from many sources, glaring lights, sickening smells and so on and so on.

As in all wars, these experiences are part of the very fibre of the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The terrifying aspects of war impose a heavy burden on the performance capability and well-being of service members. If left untreated,

combat stress reactions can devastate a unit's performance for future engagements, shatter morale and the quality of life in camp, create excessive numbers of psychiatric evacuations of service members out of theater, and haunt the Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine with the agony of "post-traumatic stress disorder for a lifetime."

Those most likely to suffer combat stress are less combat-experienced personnel or those new to a unit as well as those who have participated in an unusually large number of or high-intensity combat situations. Nevertheless, any combatant can suffer it. While a critical problem requiring immediate and effective treatment, combat stress is not a true psychi-

atric diagnosis. Instead, combat stress is a generally temporary state in normal people dealing with an abnormal situation.

What does combat stress look like?

Combat stress can assume dramatically different forms depending on the background and personality of the victim, the number and nature of stressful events and other factors that remain only poorly understood. Often the person will be "hyper vigilant," overreacting to any sound and being easily upset and scared. He or she may display a variety of physi-

cal symptoms associated with stress such as rapid heartbeat and breathing rate, excessive sweating, shaking, diarrhea, frequent urination, problems sleeping and nightmares. Victims of combat stress may be very irritable and depressed. In more affected cases, their speech may be confused and incoherent, their fear may be nearly overwhelming, they may have problems following even

simple conversations and they may emotionally "freeze up" and "blank out" the memories of details related to the traumatic experience. They may even attempt suicide or refuse or be unable to follow military orders.

How can combat stress be managed?

The first line of defense against combat stress is with the service member. Maintaining proper rest, nutrition and physical conditioning can decrease the risk of a combat-stress reaction occurring and may reduce its intensity and duration if it does occur. Learning specific stress-coping strategies also helps. Combat skill proficiency, confidence in one's abilities, trust in unit leadership and having close friends to talk about concerns

with life in general and combat in particular can make a huge difference.

The second line of defense against combat stress is with the military unit itself. Rigorous and realistic training, preview discussions on the nature of the likely combat stressors to be confronted, unit cohesiveness/team spirit/camaraderie/morale and a buddy system are powerful antidotes against stress in all of us. Supervisors and fellow unit members need to look for early signs of stress and offer assistance in dealing with them. They need to assure that the fundamental needs of their peers and subordinates are being met and that they can freely bring up personal worries and issues. It is also important that leaders actively encourage service members to seek professional assistance outside of the unit when needed and support the efforts of service members in making positive changes.

Mental-health providers, medical personnel, chaplains and specially trained combat-stress-management teams can all play important roles in helping the service member manage and resolve combat stress. Depending on their orientation and expertise, these professionals can provide the individual with tools needed to learn to manage and understand the stress reaction, can help him or her to talk thru the painful experience and, thus, keep it from coming back later to haunt the service member. If necessary, short-term medication can be given to aid sleep and reduce anxiety.

Combat stress teams have been assigned throughout Iraq and Afghanistan and are in other theaters of operation such as Bosnia and Kosovo. These teams consist of a variety of specialists including clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, occupational therapists, other medical specialists and mental-health technicians. Combat-stress-control units are force multipliers since they help to maintain the fighting strength of military units. They offer a

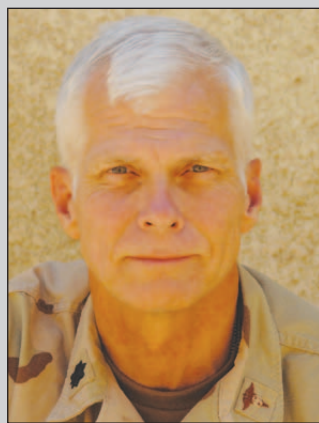
range of practical services going from assessment, outpatient treatment, classes on various aspects of stress management (such as coping-skills therapy, anger management, techniques to aid sleeping and suicide-prevention strategies) and consultation with the unit commander, to intensive treatment in a short-term, military-focused restoration facility in theater. To offset their fears of possible stigma and since stress is a fully normal response to combat situations, service members who seek care through a combat-stress-control unit do not usually have their military records so annotated. Combat stress control teams have proven quite effective, and 70 to 90 percent of the service members they see are returned quickly to duty.

Combat-stress teams and other service professionals also aid personnel in dealing with stresses not specifically related to combat situations but, rather, associated with long term overseas deployments. They train service members on behavioral strategies to manage anger and unhappiness, deal with boredom, sleep better, handle unit- or job-related stress and manage relationship problems with significant people back home.

Stress in combat is a given and happens, at least to some degree, to almost everyone. With well directed efforts from service members, their leaders and mental-health professionals the effect of combat stress, however, can be managed, thus making units more effective in combat and helping their members to cope with the very real rigors and horrors of war.

Lt. Col. John P. Allen is an Army Reserve officer assigned to the 785th Medical Company (Combat Stress Control). He holds a doctorate in clinical psychology and recently retired from the National Institutes of Health.

Guest Column



Lt. Col. John P. Allen



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The Scimitar welcomes columns, commentaries and letters from readers. Send submissions to cpiccmdinfo@baghdadforum.com.

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The Scimitar can also be viewed on the Web at <http://www.mnf-iraq.com/coalition-news/publications.htm>

In-theater treatment available to troops suffering combat-stress symptoms

By Sgt. 1st Class
Doug Sample
American Forces
Press Service

WASHINGTON — The military member who goes to combat and the one who comes back are never the same person, the Defense Department's director of mental health policy said July 14.

"No one comes back unchanged," said Army Col. Tom Burke in an interview with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service.

Burke and other DoD health officials try to reach out to those returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan who may be suffering from combat-related mental health problems or post-traumatic stress disorder, he said.

In early July, the Army released a first-of-its-kind medical report that showed front-line action had adversely affected the mental health of some service members. Burke, who advises DoD leaders on mental health issues, said combat veterans and their families should

watch for changes in behavior that can range from mild depressive and anxiety symptoms to trouble sleeping and nightmares.

"In the majority of the cases, these symptoms are transient; they are common and diminish with time," he said. The service member may have the occasional sleepless night or memories that come back out of nowhere for years, "and that's normal," he added.

Other symptoms to look for, he said, are sad and withdrawn moods, tearfulness, problems sleeping — too much or too little — and problems with appetite, memory loss and concentration. Drug and alcohol abuse also are symptoms of a problem, he added.

But the problems aren't always mild, and the symptoms are not always subtle. "If a person starts talking about hurting themselves, killing themselves, it's important to not panic but to take that kind of talk very seriously and get them to help," Burke said, "even if it involves calling 911."

Burke said that mental problems can go on for years if not treated, and that symptoms of combat-related mental illness don't always happen right away. "They develop over time," he said.

An Army study published in the July edition of the New England Journal of Medicine stated that 6 percent of Soldiers and Marines returning from combat duty experienced mental-health problems.

Burke said the low number didn't amaze him, based on what the Army has learned from studying prisoners of war suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

"The number of 6 to 12 percent is not surprising," he said. "The experience in the past among POWs," he said, "is (that) about 50 percent have PTSD; among Vietnam veterans, over the years, about 30 percent; Gulf War I, 10-15 percent," he said.

He said that declining percentage of combat-related mental-health concerns might be attributed to the military's

approach to getting better mental-health services to soldiers before, during and after deployment.

"I would like to believe that part of that is because of the proactive care on the battlefield and the full range of services by the military healthcare system," he said, "and the proactive preventive services that are provided by the combat-stress-control units that are assigned with the combat units."

Also, he said, screening now takes place before deployment, preventive service is provided during deployment, followed by more screening during redeployment and follow-up care at treatment facilities.

Burke said the low percentage also indicates that the majority of service members surveyed are faring well under combat conditions. That may be due to realistic training and having the "best equipment in the world," he said.

He said that tougher training and better equipment, along with a more stable rotation schedule "has contributed to the

resilience of the service member and their ability to handle the stresses of combat."

Burke said that DoD doesn't "want to see the Soldiers of today live through years of suffering when there's help available now." The military has a number of resources to help those seeking help, he noted, starting with the service member's chain of command. He also encourages service members to talk with comrades or their chaplains.

He added that DoD "really cares" very much about its service members and their families, and he encouraged them to take advantage of the various programs that are available.

"The help doesn't work if you don't come in to use it," he said. "Mental health problems are problems that have solutions."

Service members can get confidential counseling service through the military services' "One Source" program. The 24-hour-a-day service is for service members and their families, and provides quick, professional assistance with problems.

Demands not hurting recruiting, retention

By Kathleen T. Rhem
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The increased demands of the war on terrorism aren't hurting recruiting and retention for America's combat forces, Army and Marine leaders said here July 15.

In the active Army, retention rates are still at or near 100 percent of the service's goals, Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard A. Cody said in an interview with American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel.

Likewise, the Marines expect to meet 100 percent of their re-enlistment goals by the end of this fiscal year, Lt. Gen. Jan C. Huly, that service's deputy commandant for plans, policies and operations, said during a separate interview.

The Army also has increased its accessions goal by 30,000 soldiers over the next three years, Cody said, adding that the service is on track to meet recruiting goals for this year.

Cody acknowledged that the war on terrorism has

stretched the Army's capabilities, and he said service officials are keeping a close eye on both recruiting and retention issues.

"We're going to keep watching it," he said. "We'll provide more benefits (and) bonuses as we can. But quite frankly, it's been the selfless service and the patriotism of great young men and women ... who have raised their right hands and said, 'Send me.'"

Both leaders attributed the services' success in recruiting and retention to the high quality of the all-volunteer force.

"I think what we're really experiencing is we're reaping the benefits of the all-volunteer force," Huly said. "The quality young women and men that we recruit, the training that they receive ... and just what great young Americans they are."

Cody said soldiers' "warrior ethos" also helps keep the Army's ranks full. "I think it goes back to the leadership investment we've made with our noncommissioned officers," he said. "But it also goes back to an all-volunteer force of young soldiers who joined the Army, many right after 9/11, who fully understand that this country was

attacked, fully understand the dangers of this war and the dangers of this world and have had the courage and the patriotism to step forward and say, 'We'll fight for America, and we'll fight for our freedom.'"

Both leaders also noted the support of ordinary Americans is important for troops to feel like their work has meaning.

"They all need to know that Americans across this great nation absolutely are proud of what they've done," Cody said. "The fact that Time magazine took the American Soldier and made it the Person of the Year should tell anyone in uniform how America feels about them."

Huly said Americans' support "makes an awful lot of difference" to troops who are deployed. He said whenever he and other Marine leaders visit troops, the one question they get asked the most is "Does everybody know what we're doing, and are they still supportive of our efforts? And the answer is always a favorable and resounding 'Yes.' And it makes you feel good to be able to say that and to know that the American people are behind you."



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Corps continues to put megawatts on the grid

Submitted by the U.S. Army
Corps of Engineers
Gulf Region Division

BAGHDAD, Iraq — As the Iraqi citizens continue to celebrate the June 28 transfer of authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues pursuing projects to increase Iraq's electrical capacity, resulting in more lights turning on throughout the country as additional power-generation units continue to come online.

In the last week of June, and since the transfer, in places throughout Iraq from as far north as Mosul to as far south as Zaferina, 38 megawatts of electricity

have been added to the national capacity. This increased capacity will allow longer periods of electricity for the country which now shares the national capacity equally.

At the Zaferina project, four generators came online in late June to add 7 MW (derated), and two generators soon followed, adding another 14 MW to the grid.

At Taiji, unit number 4, a Frame Five generator came online June 29 to add 10 MW.

Most recently, north in Mosul, unit number 8, another generator, came online July 12 to add 7 MW to the grid.

The national capacity continues to climb with total-load generation for a

single day going over 100,000 MW hours on July 11. And it reached an all-time post-liberation peak June 19 of 4,963 MW, the highest level seen in a generation for much of Iraq. However, as capacity has increased, so has the demand as more Iraqis purchase air conditioners, freezers and other appliances as markets have opened under the liberation.

Since September, the Restore Iraqi Electricity effort has added 1,355 MW to the national grid and is on track to add 2,000 MW total by the end of summer.

As part of a nationwide effort, Army engineers — Soldiers and civilians — working with contractors and Iraqi

workers on sites throughout Iraq to restore the dilapidated power infrastructure and improve the quality of life for all of Iraq.

Repairing damages from more than 30 years of neglect under Saddam Hussein, Corps teams are restoring transmission lines, improving or replacing switching facilities and building or restoring more than two dozen power-generation projects to produce a capacity not seen in this country before. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' reconstruction efforts in Iraq to support the U.S. Mission Iraq, including additional photos, visit www.grd.usace.army.mil and <http://baghdad.usembassy.gov/>.

Community investments spur agriculture in Taji

Submitted by 1st Cavalry
Division

BAGHDAD, Iraq — More than \$1.3 million has been invested in community-enhancement projects in the Taji, Iraq area. Making an assessment of projects currently ongoing within their area of operations, Soldiers of the 489th's Civil Affairs Battalion's Team-5 visited seven of their nine project sites July 3.

Currently, the team is responsible for projects ranging from the refurbishment of two schools to the construction of roads linking several villages to major roadways. But as civil affairs specialist Sgt. John Hultquist explained, the emphasis is on projects with an agricultural focus.

"This area is part of what is known as the Fertile Crescent," explained Hultquist. Historically, he said, the Fertile Crescent is defined as the area beginning at the Persian Gulf, bordered by the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, and ending in Syria.

"Agriculture is the main form of commerce in this area," Hultquist said. "Most of the projects we've done have that element in mind as part of the planning. Even the roads we've constructed are meant to connect villages with roadways to local markets."

At the core of any agriculture project, especially in the arid desert landscape of Iraq, is irrigation.

"Of the nine projects we are currently involved in, four of them involve either building

irrigation canals or improving existing waterways to more efficiently bring water to villages," Hultquist said.

Hultquist went on to explain that only through working with members of the Taji area councils was his team able to identify the need to bring relief to the area in the form of agriculture projects.

"The sheiks and imams of the councils were really instrumental in making sure that correct locations were identified and that money was put into those projects that would pay the biggest peace dividend," Hultquist said. "In this case, the key was agriculture."

As initiators, contract negotiators and overall project managers, civil affairs Soldiers help ensure that standards are met and projects are completed on time.

"Followup and oversight is as important as starting a project," explained Maj. Terry Robey, the team-5 chief. "Just like construction work and projects of this magnitude back in the states, ensuring that work is being done and that a certain level of quality is being met helps guarantee a project's success."

Robey and his team regularly visit locations during a project's life cycle.

"We try and visit each site at least once a week," the Knoxville, Tenn., resident said. "The key to ensuring a successful project is consistent followup. We work hand-in-hand with members of the Taji area neighborhood and district councils, with each group [Soldiers and council members] making regular visits."

MPs, medics team up to ensure medical care

Story and photo by
Pfc. Jonathan Springer
16th Military Police Brigade

KHSOUM ABU HALAN, Iraq — With a recently rehabilitated medical clinic, this village is well on its way to having access to medical care that is right down the street.

The 16th Military Police Brigade (Airborne) from Fort Bragg, N.C., and 118th Air Support Medical Battalion from Ohio, opened the village's Khashoom Hallan Medical Clinic July 9.

Also on that day, the units performed a civil military medical operation for the village's residents and handed out medical supplies.

"A civil-military medical operation is the Army's chance to truly help out the Iraqi people by providing medical aid and supplies that they would normally not be able to get," said Maj. Alan R. Kabakoff, the 16th MP civil affairs officer.

Kabakoff added that this mission was coordinated directly by the commissioner of the Iraqi

Highway Patrol, Col. Abdul Ghafwor.

"The IHPs provided all of the security throughout the day and played an integral part in the mission's success. We couldn't have done this without their help," said Kabakoff.

Kabakoff said the CMMO was the first medical-aid mission the brigade has done.

"This is the first joint, multinational exercise that the 16th MPs have put together since getting in country," said Kabakoff. "Today, we had people from the Air Force, the Army National Guard and the IHP helping out. I've got to say that this was a great day."

Not only is the brigade trying to give the village outstanding medical aid, Kabakoff said they are also trying to establish a relationship.

"We are trying to show that we care. We want these people to understand that we truly do have compassion for the Iraqi people," said Sgt. First Class Rueben Raybon Jr., a civil affairs

See CMMO, Page 10



1st Lt. Carmelo Roxas, a doctor for the 118th Air Support Medical Battalion, uses some eyedrops to help with eye pain that an Iraqi citizen has been having lately.

Code of Conduct guided U.S. POWs in Iraq

By Donna Miles
American Forces
Press Service

WASHINGTON — A former Army prisoner of war who spent 21 days captive in Iraq before his rescue said the Code of Conduct provided the moral compass he and his fellow prisoners needed to get them through the ordeal.

Army Chief Warrant Officer Dave Williams, whose AH-64D Longbow Apache helicopter was shot down over Iraq in March 2003, said knowledge of the code helped him keep faith through loneliness — which he said “damned near killed me” — and provide leadership for six other U.S. prisoners of war.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower introduced the Code of Conduct in 1955, partly in response to the North Koreans’ use of prisoners for political propaganda during the Korean War.

Service members who have been captured in the almost 50 years since its introduction have cited the code as the foundation that helped them through the toughest times in their careers.

“It’s a guide to live by if you

find yourself in the unthinkable,” Williams told the American Forces Press Service.

The code is based on enduring concepts and traditions, Col. Mark Bracich, the director of policy, doctrine and training for the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency at Fort Belvoir, Va., told the American Forces Press Service.

Bracich said the code’s six articles outline the obligations and responsibilities of U.S. service members in harm’s way:

- * To defend the United States and its way of life

- * To avoid surrender and to evade capture at any cost short of death

- * To reject favors from the enemy

- * To help fellow prisoners stay alive

- * To avoid collaborating with the enemy

- * To avoid statements or writing that discredit the United States or its allies

- * To maintain personal responsibility for all actions and

- * To trust the U.S. government to care for your loved ones and work toward your release

These principles, taught to all

service members during their basic training, “ensure that they know what’s expected of them” in situations where they risk capture or are taken prisoner, Bracich said.

Williams said the Code of Conduct helped him through “the dark days” during his captivity and gave him strength that he shared with his fellow prisoners.

Recognizing that he was the senior-ranking officer among the prisoners, he established a chain of command. “I recognized that it was my mission to help these guys through their captivity,” he said.

Williams said he constantly reminded his fellow Soldiers — as well as himself — that fellow service members were looking for them. “We knew that they had a war to fight, but we knew it was also a top priority for them to help us,” he said.

Even as coalition weapons rained on Baghdad’s Al Rashid prison, where the Iraqis were holding the U.S. prisoners, Williams said he never doubted that his fellow Americans would come to their rescue.

“We as Americans look out for our own,” he said. “You can never lose hope.”

Iraq in Brief

Police advisors, donated gear arrive for Iraqi police

AR RAMADI, Iraq — Three international police advisors arrived at Camp Mahmudiyah to assist Marines in advising, training and supporting the Iraqi police. The IPA will help build a credible, ethical and competent Iraqi police force capable of protecting and serving citizens of Mahmudiyah.

Marines delivered police gear donated by the Beverly Hills, Ca., Police Department to the Eskan/Iskandariyah police station.

More gear and vehicles are ready for delivery in Ar Ramadi to be handed over to police in this region.

ING, police team up for cordon and search

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The Iraqi National Guard and Iraqi police marked a major milestone together July 18.

For the first time, the ING and Iraqi police worked together on a large-scale operation to search for insurgents involved in an attack that killed one police officer and wounded two others.

Approximately 90 ING troops cordoned off an area while nearly 300 police officers searched for insurgents.

Several illegal weapons were seized during the operation.

Philippines withdraws troops

AN NASIRIYAH, Iraq — The government of the Republic of the Philippines has announced its decision to withdraw their contingent from Iraq.

While in Iraq, Philippine troops provided Iraqis with humanitarian assistance and medical help through civil-military cooperation activities. They were an integral part of the Multi-National Division Center-South mission.

10th Mountain Division Joins First Team

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Approximately 2,000 Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, N.Y., convoyed here from Kuwait this month to serve with the 1st Cavalry Division at forward operating bases throughout Baghdad.

The 2nd BCT is under the leadership of Col. Mark Milley and includes the Brigade Headquarters Company; 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment; 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment; 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment; 210th Forward Support Battalion; Company B, 10th Signal Battalion; and elements of 110th Military Intelligence Battalion.

Iraqi Security Forces secure former Sadr Bureau building

TIKRIT, Iraq — The Iraqi National Guard and Iraqi police executed a cordon and search of the former Sadr Bureau building near Baghdad July 16.

The Diwaniyah governor had earlier ordered Sadr personnel out of the building. After no response was received from the Sadr personnel, ING troops and Iraqi police cleared and secured the building.

Iraqi Security Forces conducted the operation without requesting assistance from multinational forces, and Iraqi police are maintaining the security of the building.

Soldier virtually attends daughter’s first birthday

BALAD, Iraq — A 13th Corps Support Command Soldier attended his daughter’s first birthday by video teleconference from his multinational force base near Taji July 14.

Spc. Josh Strickland of Valdosta, Ga., sang “Happy Birthday” to his daughter, Shelby, and saw her walk for the first time thanks to the Freedom Calls Foundation.

Freedom Calls is a nonprofit organization founded for the sole purpose of providing free communication to deployed service members and civilians.

Freedom Calls provides high-speed Internet access, video links and voice over Internet protocol phones at no charge to more than 1,400 service members and deployed civilians per day.

Soldiers call home on house

By Sgt. M. Trent Lowry
U.S. Marine Corps
Multi-National Force-Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Task Force 1st Armored Division Soldiers made free calls home before redeploying from Baghdad to Kuwait.

From July 3 to 8, Soldiers were offered the chance to call the United States or Germany — which most of the 1 AD troops call home when not deployed — on MCI’s tab. They took advantage of the call center to reach out and touch family members and friends.

“I’ve called home every day since (the phone center has) been here,” said Spc. Joshua K. Manglicmot, a communications specialist with 141st Signal Battalion, who called his fiancée, Kealani Preston, and his mother and brother, all of whom live on the island of Molokai, Hawaii. “I take as much time to talk to them as possible.”

Manglicmot explained why the phone center was popular with the Soldiers of 1 AD, who are wrapping up a marathon 15-month deployment to Iraq.

“This keeps our morale high, getting to talk with our families since we’ve been out here so long,” Manglicmot said. “It’s awesome — one of the best things I’ve seen since I’ve been out here. I’d like to say thanks to MCI.”

Other Soldiers must have agreed with Manglicmot, since more than 1,900 calls were placed July 3 and 4, according to Sgt. Maj. Donald A. Sarringer, the division’s chief signal noncommissioned officer. All service members at the base near

Baghdad International Airport were eligible to use the phone center for the free calls.

“This had a great impact with the Soldiers,” Sarringer said. “They could call home and say, ‘Happy 4th of July. I’m alright. Everything’s fine, and I’m coming home soon.’”

Sarringer helped work out the details with MCI since the company first brought communications systems to the Iraqi theater in November 2003 for the winter holidays, keeping a calling center nicknamed “Big Whitey” open until February. Big Whitey went to the multinational force’s Camp Victory, but when Old Ironsides’ troops were extended in April, efforts to bring free phone service to the Soldiers was renewed.

Making communications available to troops is a highly important task, Sarringer said.

“It’s a very important thing for the Soldiers to be able to talk to the folks back home,” said Sarringer, a Central Islip, Long Island, N.Y., native. “To me, it’s a force multiplier to have Soldiers in the trenches be able to come back to a base to make a call back home and have that contact with loved ones.”

Part of the deal for the 4th of July holiday was that MCI provided 100 calling cards for Soldiers to use to call home at no cost to the troops.

“I think this should be everywhere,” said Sgt. Justin L. Johnson, a tank gunner on the Headquarters and Headquarters Company operations staff. “The other phone centers’ charges eat up a calling card real quick, so everybody should have this opportunity to call home free.”

Reserve Marines serve in ancient land



**Story and photos by
Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi**
I Marine Expeditionary Force

CAMP BABYLON, Iraq — Marines of Detachment C, 4th Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company can be spotted on occasions buying souvenirs, or, if they're a little more daring, pet scorpions inside a local Iraqi market here.

During off time, the Marines are able to enjoy the ancient lands and local people surrounding the headquarters of the Multi-National Division Center-South, led by the Polish Army.

A little more than two months ago, the leathernecks were at home on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean — residing close enough to make their drill weekends at the West Palm Beach, Fla., reserve center.

But duty called, and now these weekend warriors are full-time Marines, busy supporting foreign militaries in Iraq by coordinating air strikes to destroy enemy targets.

The news did not come as a shock to these Marines, though; they knew replacements were needed for 4th ANGLICO's previous detachment. Their number was plucked; it was time for them to make good on their promise of serving their nation.

Maj. Stephen D. Danyluk, the unit's air officer, admitted that activation does add a strain on reservists because they are pulled away from their civilian jobs and families.

For him, it was not difficult. He still has ties to active duty, simply because his wife is a

lawyer with the Marines. While she's working at Quantico, Va., Danyluk is flying commercial airliners out of Washington between drill weekends.

Another family ANGLICO is separated from is the "Green Machine."

"One of the more difficult parts is being away from other Marines," said Staff Sgt. Jose L. Jimenez, a team chief from Miami. "We are it out here. We've had to be chameleons to adapt to all the different foreign nations and services. But being alone like this has built our camaraderie really high."

The activation does have one perk — the location from which the team is operating.

In their idle moments, the Marines have the luxury of touring through the ancient ruins of the famed ancient city — Babylon, or Babel, which means gate of God.

First stop on the service members' tour of the reconstructed city is the Ishtar Gate. The entrance into the reconstructed palace of Nebuchadnezzar II is detailed with mosaic drawings of Babylon's deities. Troops look like ants while walking through the massive arched gate.

U.S. and foreign troops wander through the maze of corridors and take photos for their scrapbooks. Some mill about or simply find a tree to relax under and read a book.

The best vantage point of the ancient land is from Saddam Hussein's former palace. The palace was constructed on the highest elevation in the vicinity. On the rooftop, nearly seven stories high, one can easily see

the canal — dredged from the Euphrates River — snake its way through the camp and the thousands of palm trees that line its banks.

"It's been a bonus to be stationed here," said Lance Cpl. William Meyer, a field radio operator from Indianapolis. "I've gotten into the history of the land by reading up on it."

Even in this historical land, the Marines have etched out their own space and brought pieces of American culture.

Cpl. Jon Dearolf's room is smothered wall-to-wall in surfing pictures.

"My roommate and I decided to start hanging up the magazine pictures as soon as we got here," said the forward observer from Tampa, Fla. "It's just a little taste of home and what we miss."

The only objects interrupting this University of Southern Florida graduate's surfing display are pictures of his wife. The two exchanged vows only a couple of months before he departed for Iraq.

"It's really difficult to be away from her right now," said Dearolf, who is considering pursuing a commission in the Corps. "But you know what they say — the hardest job in the Corps is being a Marine's wife."

Missing family members is a natural reaction for all Marines on deployment; it is one of the toughest challenges to overcome, but "I feel the Marines have adapted real well," said Lt. Col. Thomas R. Morgan, the commanding officer and a native of Orlando, Fla.

Lance Cpl. William Meyer, a field radio operator with Detachment Charlie, 4th Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, walks through the Ishtar Gate at Camp Babylon, Iraq. The gate is the entrance to the reconstructed palace of Nebuchadnezzar II, the king of ancient Babylon. Detachment Charlie Marines have been in Iraq since May supporting the Polish-led Multi-National Division Center-South in southwestern Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Above: Polish soldiers with the Multi-National Division Center-South watch Marines with Detachment C, 4th Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company complete convoy training at Camp Babylon, Iraq

Right: Corporals Kent Almaral, from Deerfield Beach, Fla., and Jon Dearolf, a native of Tampa Fla., both members of Detachment C, 4th Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Company rehearse room-clearing tactics at their compound in Camp Babylon, Iraq.



New troops jump right in to training

Soldiers of the 39th BCT attend a one-week training course before moving on to their units

Story and photos by
Cpl. Benjamin Cossel

122nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

TAJI, Iraq — With just three days in theater under their belts, Soldiers sent to augment the 39th Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Cavalry Division lost little time adjusting to their environment and jumped right in to training.

Beginning with close quarters combat training, the new Soldiers of the 39th BCT began a week of training before moving to their new units.

As the Soldiers filed into the dimly lit training facility, handpicked instructors from the brigade began the training. The 20 Soldiers were broken down into teams of four and assigned instructors.

“What we intend to do with the new troops is to not only put them through doctrinal training such as the close quarters combat they’re currently doing, but we also have convoy-lanes training and a couple other classes scheduled,” said 1st Lt. Marc Pierce, the officer in charge of training.

In addition to combat experience, many of the instructors have spent time during their deployment training members of the Iraqi National Guard, said Forrest City, Ark.’s 1st Lt. Vernon Sparkmon, the executive officer for Company B, 3-153 Inf.

“We have some very fine instructors teaching here,” Sparkmon said. “Their experience in training the Iraqi National Guard, as well as the continued development of their Soldiers, makes these instructors some of the best we have.”

Soldiers were taught the basics of carrying their rifles and room clearing, with emphasis placed on entering and exiting.

“It’s extremely important that before you come

out of a cleared room that you yell out ‘Room clear,’” Sgt. Keith Parris, of 3-153 Inf., said. “You certainly don’t want someone to mistake you for a bad guy. Anytime you participate in a cordon and search or a raid, if you don’t know what you’re doing, you could get killed.”

As the Soldiers prepared for another run through, Parris explained that the intent of the training was just to cover the basics.

“By no means can we teach these Soldiers everything,” said the Olean, N.Y., resident. “This is just an introductory course. For some of these Soldiers, that’s all they’ll need, and for others, once they get to their units, they’ll be doing this stuff frequently, and it will become very familiar.”

After the first training session, Soldiers relaxed outside before the next class was scheduled to begin. Going over their experiences with each other, the Soldiers traded tips and demonstrated what they had just learned.

“This was definitely good training,” said Spc. Jared Woodmansee of Pine Bluff, Ark. “This sort of stuff isn’t part of my normal [job] as an intelligence analyst, but I’ve heard that we all get to spend time outside the wire, and you just never know. We should definitely do more of it.”

Sitting down in one of the few areas of shade, Pfc. Courtland Faulkner of Little Rock, Ark., also said she thought the training was beneficial.

“The three weeks of training we received at Fort Hood was good, but I really wished we had spent more time doing training like this,” Faulkner said. “Any training we receive just goes that much further in making the adjustment to being here that much easier.”



Spc. Jared Woodmansee, of the 39th Brigade Combat Team, leads a group of four into a room during an “enter and clear” drill during a close-quarters-combat training session.



Above: Sgt. Keith Parris (left) of 3rd Battalion, 153rd Infantry, instructs Pfc. Amber Rettstatt of Headquarters Company, 39th Brigade Combat Team, that while she was the last person to enter the room, she will be the first person out. The drill was part of a close-quarters-combat training session held for recently arrived 39th BCT Soldiers. Left: Newly arrived Soldiers of the 39th BCT learn the basics of a “stack” formation. The four Soldiers form a tight group and walk as a single unit before entering a room. The lesson was part of the close-quarters-combat training the Soldiers received before joining their units.

BASES *Continued from Page One*

Nearly five months after construction began at Al Kasik, more than 500 Iraqis flock to the site daily to install tile, drainage systems and concrete foundations under the watchful eye of Dillon's and Cirian's teams.

The effort in the small desert town is one of many led by the Corps designed to provide the Iraqis a foundation for the future and an opportunity to learn marketable skills needed in the new democratic society.

In Kirkuk, the Corps is building a \$47.5 million training base for the new Iraqi army that will employ more than 1,000 Iraqis and upon completion will house three battalions of trainees.

"This is about giving something to the Iraqi people," Cirian said, as he

walked the 10-kilometer fence line July 12. "Using local labor, we are able to teach the people and create a long-term facility that will help the Iraqis well into the future."

The U.S. Project and Contracting Office, an agency charged with oversight of the \$18.4 billion appropriated by the U.S. Congress to support the reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure, is currently working with the Corps to construct four additional new Iraqi army bases, one Iraqi Navy base and rebuild the country's Ministry of Defense.

"The goal with all of these projects is to give the Iraqi military a platform to get back up and running," said Joanne Milo, a project manager with the Baghdad-based PCO. "When that hap-

pens, the Iraqis will be better able to protect their people, and multinational forces can go home."

The projects, executed by the Corps, represent part of the Corps' reconstruction efforts in the country, an effort that rivals the work of the post-World War II Marshall Plan in Europe.

"The easy thing would be to bring heavy equipment in here and build these facilities quickly," said Brig. Gen. Thomas Bostick, the Corps' Gulf Region Division commander in Baghdad, "but we have to think about this from a different perspective."

"As we put local men and women to work, they develop skills and build a strong, viable workforce for the future and a solid foundation for the country."

TF Danger pins warrants

By Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Joseph
196th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

TIKRIT, Iraq — Task Force Danger units at Forward Operating Base Speicher here held a ceremony in the base gymnasium July 9 to award branch insignia to warrant officers and rank insignia for chief warrant officers 5s.

The event and changeover coincided with the 86th anniversary of the Warrant Officer Corps' founding.

The insignia for chief warrant officer 5 replaces the old master warrant officer insignia that has been used since 1988, said Chief Warrant Officer Jamie Haas, the 4th Brigade safety officer.

Originally, CW4s received the title of master warrant officer with no promotion in pay grade. In 1991, the rank of CW5 was recognized, and those elevated to that rank continued to wear the insignia of master warrant officer, Haas said.

Brig. Gen. Stephen D. Mundt, the assistant division commander for support, pinned the new rank insignia on four of the task force's six chief warrant officer 5s.

Unit commanders then went into the ranks of the all-warrant-officer formation and pinned branch insignia in place of the "rising eagle" insignia on the collars of the remaining warrant officers.

Mundt addressed the honorees and crowd and commended the warrant officers for expertise and professionalism.

"You have had a right, ever since I met you, to wear your branch insignia on your collar," he told the formation.

The change is Army-wide by order of the chief of staff of the Army. Warrant officers now align themselves with their respective branches.

Seventy-eight warrant officers from 13 Army branches received branch insignia as fellow soldiers looked on. The 1st Infantry Division Band provided music for the ceremony.

CAPTIVES *Continued from Page Two*

Service members considered at "moderate" risk of capture receive slightly more training, generally consisting of eight to 10 hours of videos about survival, evasion, resistance and escape techniques and, sometimes, field training, Bracich said.

Only those service members whose duties put them at the highest risk of capture attend their service's survival, evasion, resistance and escape school. There, they learn fundamentals ranging from what's safe to eat when they're in the field evading capture to how to resist their

captors' attempts to exploit them. They also go through realistic scenarios similar to what they might face during captivity.

"Everything I was taught in the course got applied in a real-world situation," Williams said.

And while acknowledging that "nothing can fully prepare you" for the hardship and loneliness of captivity, Williams is committed to sharing everything he's experienced and learned with his fellow service members in case they fall into a similar situation. He's lec-

tured at military posts around the country and recently became the new officer in charge of the Survive, Evade, Resistance and Escape School at Fort Rucker, Ala.

Meanwhile, Williams said he's encouraged by the military's effort to train more service members in how to avoid capture and successfully endure captivity if necessary.

"The more tools a soldier has in his rucksack when he goes off to fight, the better off he'll be," Williams said.

CMMO *Continued from Page Six*

noncommissioned officer with the brigade.

Throughout the day, the brigade handed out more than 200 soccer balls, first aid kits and stuffed animals, said Raybon.

"We came to this country to help them out, and this CMMO mission is our way of showing the villagers what the U.S. Army is all about," Raybon said.

Sgt. First Class Robert A. Ramirez, also a noncommissioned officer for the brigade's civil affairs section, said that they have spent more than five months rehabilitating the village medical clinic after getting staffing approval from the Iraqi government's Ministry of Health.

"Since the brigade arrived in country, we have spent over \$40,000 getting the clinic ready to open," said Ramirez. "We came here to treat the villagers for acute

medical care and get a feel for their needs. These people needed medical supplies, and they are getting looked at and taken care of. It feels really good to help."

Ramirez said all of the soccer balls, toys and other gifts were donated by Fort Bragg's main post chapel and the medical supplies were donated by the 118th ASMB.

"This medical attention will help us out a lot. We don't have any clinics near our village here," said Mohammed Ahmed Al-Jebori, speaking through a translator.

"All of us that are apart of this village are poor. By having the Americans come out here and give us medical supplies and the doctors treating our problems is a very good thing. We are all grateful," said Al-Jebori.

First Lt. Cermelo Roxas, a doctor for the 118th and one of

the pediatricians for the CMMO, said that he loved getting to help the Iraqi children.

"I'm happy to help the kids the most because they really are the future of this country; it's great to put a smile on their face," Roxas said.

Throughout the day, Kabakoff said, more than 98 patients were seen and more than 300 gift packs were given out.

"This is what it's all about, and this is the next phase of the U.S. Army's campaign here in Iraq," said Col. David E. Quantock, the commander of the 16th MPs.

"We are providing excellent medical care to these villagers with the help of the IHPs; we are working together to build a safer Iraq," said Quantock. "This CMMO is just one example of the Army building confidence with the citizens of this country."

POSTAL *Continued from Page Three*

ballot, they can use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot. This form allows them to write in their votes and send it in by the deadline.

"Voting assistance officers at each overseas unit are required to have stock of the FWAB for this situation," Davis said.

Davis also said that if a Soldier filled out and sent in the FWAB and then received a ballot, the local ballot could still be filled out and sent back in if it arrived in time.

Currently, Davis said the Army is trying to get the message to get registered to as many Soldiers as possible.

An AKA-all e-mail was sent at the beginning of May to 1.3 million recipients,

reminding them of the importance to register and the details of how to do so. Davis said the e-mail was the largest ever sent out on AKA.

Senior Army leadership has directed an Army-wide Personnel Asset Inventory be conducted during the period July 30 through Aug. 15. This will be yet another opportunity to provide the Federal Post Card Application to Soldiers and to provide the necessary support and assistance, Davis said.

"We've got an emphasis (on this issue) from the secretary of Defense all the way down," Davis said. "We want to make sure all the Soldiers are provided with the opportunity to register and cast their ballot."

TV show gives local Iraqis chance to talk with Iraqi, multinational leaders

Story and photo by
Spc. Sean Kimmons
25th Infantry Division
Public Affairs

KIRKUK, Iraq — After years of being smothered by the media restrictions of Saddam Hussein's regime, Iraqi people are now exposed to a variety of internal and external information sources.

An unbiased source of information comes from the U.S.-funded Iraqi Media Network, which replaced the old Iraqi media network into a modern media organization for the Iraqi people.

In Kirkuk, IMN established the Kirkuk TV station. This station, like other IMN stations, passes along local and national news and entertainment to the Iraqi people.

Kirkuk TV is airing a live talk show program that allows Iraqis to discuss local issues with local leaders via telephone.

Local Iraqi and multinational force leaders participate on this talk show dubbed "Political Conversations."

Initiated by the information operations cell of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, the talk show provides leaders the opportunity to eliminate rumors and limit confusion citizens may have within the Kirkuk area.

It is also a way for leaders, especially on the Iraqi side, to earn the confidence of the local Iraqi populace.

"The primary focus of starting this



Lt. Col. Eric Schacht, the executive officer for Task Force Danger's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, and Kirkuk's police chief, Gen. Turhan Yussef, appear on "Political Conversations," a live talk show that airs on Kirkuk TV, the Iraqi Media Network station in Kirkuk, Iraq.

show was two-part," said Maj. Bill Southard, the chief of the information operations cell. "One part was to legitimize the Iraqi government, and the other was to provide information to the Iraqi people."

Because of Saddam's extensive use of false information, Iraqi people are still hesitant to believe anything from the Iraq

media, Southard said. This was his main reason to create a talk show that would be aired live.

"I wanted this [live] talk show so Iraqi people could see their leadership, ask them questions and make their own educated decisions on what's going on in their future," Southard said.

The recent transfer of sovereignty was

the primary topic of discussion for the first two episodes of "Political Conversations."

Kirkuk Coalition Provisional Authority Coordinator Paul Harvey and Kirkuk Governor Abdul Rahman Mustafa were the guests for the inaugural show June 25. Most of the questions they answered pertained to the June 28 transfer of sovereignty.

On the second show July 1, Lt. Col. Eric Schacht, the 2nd BCT executive officer, and the Kirkuk police chief, General Turhan Yussef, joined together to display that multinational forces are still in Iraq even after the transition and will continue their partnership with the Iraqi Security Forces.

"I think it's good to get this show kicked off as we turn over sovereignty," Schacht said after the July 1 show. "Eventually, we want this show to go more into a format of Iraqi leaders talking to their public."

Besides working with the Kirkuk TV station, the 2nd BCT information operations cell helps spread the multinational force message through local newspapers, weekly press conferences and media advisories.

"We are doing everything in our power to inform the Iraqi people of all the good things such as projects, security and economic development within the Kirkuk province.

"Also, we are trying to get local Iraqis involved with the national, regional and local governments," Southard said.

Keeping 'Warriors' at full strength

By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel
122nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

TAJI, Iraq — America's "First Team" announced that the division met third-quarter retention goals on July 3. One of the reasons the division met those goals was due to Master Sgt. Joni Evans, 4th Brigade Combat Team Warriors' retention noncommissioned officer in charge.

"This job is my life," Evans said.

With 17 of her 25 years in the military dedicated to career counseling, that claim is not made lightly.

"The years of experience really help," Evans said. "I can speak to almost every fear and concern that Soldiers coming to see me might have."

Evans said with the division deployed, retention within the 1st Cavalry Division has brought new challenges.

"Many Soldiers are worn out with the current operations tempo," she said. "But when you sit down with them and compare what their options might be in the civilian world, where you don't know for sure if you're going to have a job one day to the next, a job that you are completely assured of — even with a high operations tempo — becomes more appealing."

Her approach must be working. Over the third quarter, Evans has reenlisted 63 troopers in the 4th BCT. Evans

said she has also helped Troopers of 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment.

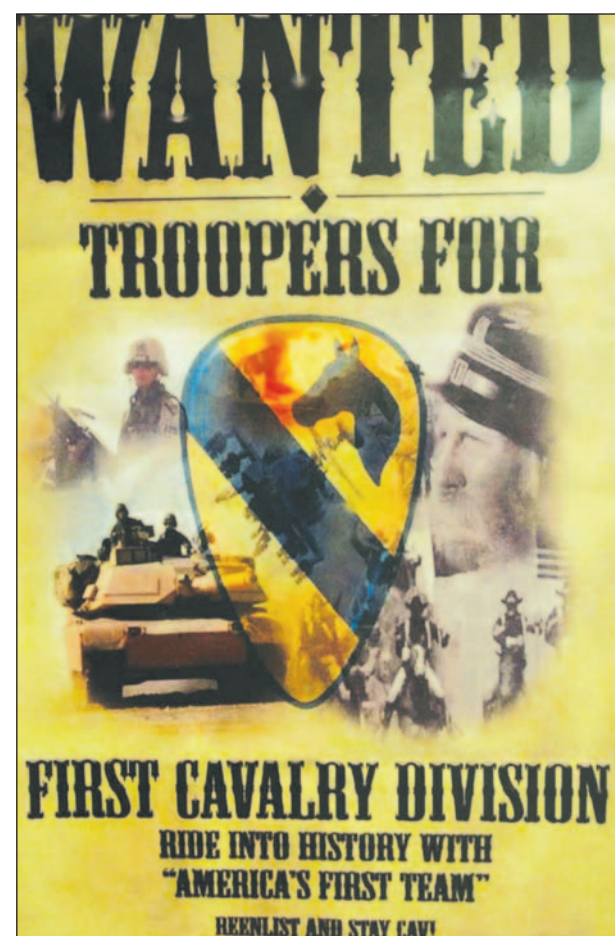
"2-7 doesn't really have a retention representative here being they've been broken off from their home brigade to augment the 39th BCT," she said. "I also point Soldiers of the 39th BCT in the right direction with who they need to talk to regarding reserve component matters. So really, in some way, shape or form, I have a hand in all the retention efforts on Camp Cooke."

Attributing much of her success to those who support her, Evans lauded the efforts of the command and senior noncommissioned officers of the brigade.

"I have great support," she said. "I don't think there has been a time when a Soldier has been in my office and Command Sgt. Maj. Sanders (the brigade command sergeant major) doesn't stop in, talk to the Soldier, see how they're doing and just be there for them."

Reflecting on her years as a career counselor and plans for the future, Evans has plans to retire when she returns home.

"I will certainly miss doing this for a living," she said. "In 17 years, my job has never been boring, it never gets old. No single Soldier that walks through my doors ever have the same needs, wants or desires. That has definitely kept it very interesting."



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Marines keep NBC skills sharp

Story and photo by

Cpl. Shawn C. Rhodes

1st Marine Division Public Affairs

CAMP MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq — Chemical threats for Marines in Iraq haven't been a leading concern since combat operations last year, but that doesn't mean anyone is letting his guard down.

Marines from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment held decontamination drills to keep themselves ready to respond to a nuclear, chemical or biological attack.

"During this three-day class, we spent a few hours each day bringing the Marines up to speed on detailed decontamination training for personnel and vehicles," said Cpl. Jason L. Barton, a 28-year-old NBC specialist from Wilson, Kan. "After the class, they're supposed to go back and teach this stuff to their Marines."

The reason every Marine needed to know how to supervise and participate in a decontamination site was because you never knew who would be available, Barton said. Marines from Headquarters and Service Company were chosen because they would likely aid the rifle companies who would be exposed to an NBC agent.

"The Marine Corps is a winning team, and we prepare for the impossible as well as the probable," Barton said. "There's no doubt this training could

save lives."

During the training, the Marines were shown how to navigate each station of decontamination center. They learned how to properly disrobe contaminated Marines and clean them of all NBC agents. Once the Marines were thought to clean, they were tested with NBC-detection tools.

"The two things we use are the chemical agent monitor and the automatic chemical-agent detector," said Lance Cpl. Peter W. Duffy, a 20-year-old NBC specialist from North Hampton, Mass. "There's nothing hard about operating these detectors. These guys can pass on how to operate them, which will help if we ever have an NBC attack."

The Marines were expected to leave the classes with a new appreciation and understanding of NBC procedures. Although the classes taught the Marines some things they didn't know and refreshed them on others, practice still makes perfect.

"We have plans for follow-on classes to keep this information fresh in their heads," Barton explained. "We need to maintain their skills so each of them can properly operate a decontamination center."

Handling NBC decontamination presents a concern to those treating other Marines. In the event of an NBC attack, Marines could be wounded and contaminated with agents. This problem was addressed during the classes.



Lance Cpl. Peter W. Duffy, a 20-year-old nuclear, biological and chemical specialist from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, uses a charcoal pad to wipe Cpl. Jason L. Barton's protective mask. The NBC specialists showed other Marines how to properly decontaminate others during a three-day course at Camp Mahmudiyah, Iraq. The "train-the-trainer" program is designed to aid Marines in spreading NBC skills.

"Marines need to realize they're going through the decontamination center before they go to the base's aid station here," said Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher T. Brown, a 34-year-old hospital corpsman from Albany, Ga. "We have to make sure they won't infect the sterile environment of the aid station."

This doesn't mean that wounded Marines won't get medical help in time.

"We have NBC stretchers we can use to carry Marines through the decontamination process," Brown said. "We'll also perform life-saving steps the whole time if they're needed."

In addition, corpsmen can also stand in

for the Marines inside the decontamination center to help wash off NBC agents.

"Something I learned here was that you can't take their gas mask off until they're at that station in the center," Brown said. "Even if it would help you treat him you could hurt yourself and him more by breaking his gas-mask seal before the right time."

The site also gave the Marines the added bonus of practicing in a set-up just as it would be used in combat environment. This enabled them to obtain a more real-life feel for the whole process.

"It was just like walking them through the real thing," Barton said.

GENERAL ORDER

No. 1



Soldiers get creative with words

By Spc. Andy Miller

122nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The day-in, day-out routine of life in a combat zone has many Soldiers looking for a diversion at the end of the duty day.

Movies, video games, Internet and the gym are some of the most popular pastimes for Soldiers, as time permits. Some, however, look inward for a source of recreation that is found only through their own creativity.

Camp Eagle here held its first "Eagle's Cry" open forum poetry event July 9. It was a chance for Soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division stationed here to showcase their creative talents in an open venue. The event founder, Sgt. Wesley Williams, a chaplain's assistant with 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment (Task Force Lancer), said he sees poetry as a way for people to artistically express their views.

"I wanted to give everybody who is interested in the field or area the chance to express themselves and have another outlet to release their stress out here in this camp," Williams said.

Like Williams, Spc. Steve McSwain, a communications specialist with the 13th Signal Battalion, uses

poetry to express himself. He said he started writing as a way to relieve stress, but lately, most of his poetry is written for his wife back in Killeen, Texas.

"Back home, where I'm from, relieving stress is joining a gang," McSwain said about growing up in Sacramento, Calif. "But for me, I took my aggression out on paper."

Recently one of the poems written for his wife was selected as an editor's choice award and will be published in an upcoming book of poetry.

Pvt. William Richie, a Paladin howitzer crewmember with Battery C, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, is another Soldier at Camp Eagle who's had poetry published. He's been writing poetry since he was in the seventh-grade, and more recently, he's gotten involved with writing music with other Soldiers from the First Team.

Richie said if someone is interested in writing poetry or music, they should go ahead and do it without worrying about what others might think.

"As long as it's good to you, it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks," Richie said. "As long as you pour your heart into it, and you honestly sit down there and write something that's compelling to you, it's going to touch the hearts of other people."

Walking the beat in Zone Zulu

Story and photos by
Cpl. Shawn C. Rhodes
1st Marine Division

CAMP MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq — It's 9 a.m. and already topping 90 degrees outside.

Any normal person would be inside sucking up the air conditioning, but for a group of Marines with 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, that's not an option.

They have to brave the heat to make sure no one can launch mortars or set up ambushes on their comrades.

The patrols that circle areas outside the base here are known as Zone Zulu patrols. The Marines who walk them every day know them as something else — six hours of dripping sweat.

"We rotate the times squads leave on patrol to always have a presence outside the gate," said Sgt. Jonathan D. Calcamuggio, a 26-year-old squad leader with Company G, from Owatonna, Minn. "They only go for so many hours because it wouldn't be feasible to carry all the water we'd need for a longer patrol. On a mounted patrol where we



Lance Cpl. Adam M. Groves, a squad automatic weapon gunner with Company G, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, peers from the bushes out at a field thought to be used for enemy activity. The 20-year-old from Deale, Md., participates with his squad on patrols that circle the perimeter of the base to deter mortar and ambush attacks.

drive everywhere, we can go through 200 little bottles of water in a day."

The Marines left the base with a supply of both water and ammunition. The sights and sounds of the busy highway near

the base quickly faded into the quiet of the countryside. They dispersed themselves as they crossed fields and roads, circling around their base.

The group of Marines found a place to oversee the highway in front of them and remain hidden. The sun was hidden behind a cover of clouds. It just caused the weather to be hot and humid.

"This is one of the best days for weather we've seen since we got to Iraq," Calcamuggio said, looking up at the sky. "The only problem is we all look like we took a swim in a river, as wet as our cammies are."

The squad watched the road until it was time for them to move again. They walked along a canal road toward a large hill where they could overlook the ghetto of Mahmudiyah from which the camp had received mortar attacks. To get there, they had to tackle the canal, and there was no bridge to cross.

A metal pipe stretching from one end of the canal to other was the solution to their problem. It sat 20 feet above the water and was their only access to the other side, so they began crossing it. Weighed down by their water, ammunition and protective gear, the Marines did everything from stretch their arms out for balance to stopping to take a few breaths to cross it.

"With all the gear these guys have on, they'd sink like a stone if they fell in," Calcamuggio said. "It's a good thing we all

made it across."

The squad took the hill by digging their boots into the soft dirt one step at a time, each boot sinking into the earth as the Marine inched higher.

"The thing going through everyone's mind right now is, 'I hope they don't get a fix on our position and start dropping mortars on us,'" Calcamuggio said.

The Marines settled in under what shade they could in the middle of the day. The temperature was now past 115 degrees. The heat could take a Marine out of the fight as fast as a bullet. The only comfort was the bottled water.

They remained unfazed as shots rang out inside the city. Every time they came near the ghetto they could hear rifle fire, usually being shot for celebratory reasons.

"We keep an eye out for anything suspicious going on in the city, but we're used to them firing weapons inside the ghetto," Calcamuggio explained. "It's just what they do."

After watching the city and

the farms around them for an hour, they moved on to their next position inside a date tree grove. Here, the land was wet and muddy, shaded by the trees and fed by primitive irrigation systems. The mud clung to the Marines' boots in thick, heavy clumps, dragging grass with them as they trudged to their position.

The trees offered Marines shade but no relief from the heat.

"Being in this grove just makes the humidity worse," Calcamuggio said. "The wet mud and the heat combine to make it miserable. I think the thing we're all going to do when we get back is just stay in our hooch out of the sun for the rest of the day."

The few people the squad saw during their patrol had mixed reactions to their presence. Some of the children ran right up to the Marines and others were pulled inside by their parents.

"Some of the kids haven't seen Marines enough to be used to them," said Lance Cpl. Andre R. Daigle, a 30-year-old from Orlando, Fla. "It'll get better the more we're out here."

When the patrol was done, the Marines were soaked through

with sweat and had an inch of mud on the soles of their boots, but they were happy. Hot chow and rest beckoned them home.

Their six hours of braving the summer weather in Iraq paid dividends they didn't see, however.

"If we didn't launch these patrols, the frequency of indirect-fire attacks would increase. Our presence on these patrols deters the bad guys."

"If we didn't launch these patrols, the frequency of indirect-fire attacks would increase. Our presence on these patrols deters the bad guys."

— Maj. Brian W. Neil

ence on these patrols deters the bad guys," said Maj. Brian W. Neil, the battalion's operations officer and a Middletown, Conn., resident. "The goal of the Zone Zulu patrols is to disrupt mortar-fire positions, and it does that. They deter and disrupt."

The patrols serve another purpose for the Marines on them, however.

"These patrols really make the time go by faster, even though they're tough," said Daigle.



With no bridge, Marines from Company G, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment had to cross this steel pipe spanning the canal below. With more than 40 pounds of gear on each of them, balance was key to not taking a swim.

Lots of air time means lots of maintenance

Story and photos by
Cpl. Benjamin Cossel
122nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

CAMP COOKE, Iraq — The helicopters of the 1st Cavalry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team took to the air with a vengeance in the spring. Flying missions that included supporting troops on the ground during combat operations to transporting personnel between

forward operating bases, the hours spent in the air quickly accumulated. As aviation assets fly more and more missions, maintenance cycles and upkeep on the precision equipment becomes more and more crucial.

Responsible for phased and unscheduled maintenance, mechanics of the 615th Aviation Support Battalion working the night shift are part of a 24-hour team that keeps 4th BCT's birds in the air.

"Each helicopter has a number of hours it can be flown before it must be taken off-line and put into a phased-maintenance cycle," explained Capt. Cecil Nix, a platoon leader with the 615th. "For the Apache, it's 250. For the Black Hawk, it's 500. And for the Kiowa, it's 125. After they've reached that threshold, the bird is brought into the shop, and my team starts phased maintenance."

Originally from Torrance, Ca., Nix went on to explain that phased maintenance is a very in-depth, complicated, lengthy process.

"When a bird does come in, we check everything," he said, resting his hand on a stack of technical manuals standing more than a foot high. "Each one of our helicopters has a series of manuals detailing the exact manner and method of phased maintenance. We take everything apart, check it over, fix it if needs it ... oil, lube. It's sort of like bringing your car in for a major overhaul."

Nix said that a typical phased-maintenance cycle takes about a month to complete and is usually done once a year.

"The rate at which we've been flying these birds has been astronomical," he said. "Back in garrison, we might perform a phased maintenance once a year. Here, we've been performing them about every four months."

Nix noted that in June alone, 4th BCT pilots logged 1,700 hours of flight time, the highest amount for any of the com-

mands in theater.

"That's a lot of wear and tear on a bird," he said. "And if it wasn't for my guys in the hangar, we wouldn't be able to get it done."

The awe-inspiring machines that adorn the flight line stand in stark contrast to the stripped down shells that rest inside the hangar. Power tools sound with their "zip zip," blending with the cacophony of metal on metal as wrenches turn, removing rotor blades and adjusting transmissions.

"Everyone in here understands the importance of their job," said Staff Sgt. Jose Hernandez, a platoon sergeant with the 615th ASB. "And everyone here does their job incredibly well."

Hernandez said that completing phased maintenance is very detailed work for his mechanics, but they are getting it done in record time.

"An Apache coming into the hangar at Fort Hood, might take 30 days to get through a maintenance cycle," he said. "But realizing how important this all is, we've been getting the Apaches back on the flight line in about 12 days. We have extremely tight quality controls in place, as well, ensuring that everything that goes back into operation has

been checked, double checked and triple checked."

Meeting mission requirements of an increased workload and expectations of quick turnaround times has had a positive affect on the mechanics.

"My teams are easily gaining years worth of garrison experience out here," Hernandez beamed. "You just can't simulate some of the conditions combat and the total number of hours flown puts these birds under."

Perched atop the wing of an Apache, Pfc. Jordan Willburn, an Apache mechanic, calls down for confirmation.

"We're working on the transmission tonight, right?" he calls out.

"That's right.

Open it up and get it looked over," comes a reply.

"The amount I've learned in just four months is incredible," said Willburn, a native of Maybears, Texas. "Every time one of these birds comes into our shop, we know that the safety and the trust of the pilots is in our hands. If we don't do our job, and do it right, troops on the ground don't get support and birds fall out of the sky. That's a lot of responsibility, but we all take it very seriously, and we do it right."



Sgt. Aaron Hazelwood, an armored electrician with the 615th Aviation Support Battalion, works to prepare the 30-millimeter gun mounts on an Apache helicopter during a phased-maintenance cycle. Armored electricians are one of the many mechanics and technicians that make up the 615th ASB's night-shift mechanics platoon.



Pfc. Jordan Willburn, an Apache mechanic with the 615th Aviation Support Battalion, unwinds bailing wire that he will use to secure the transmission of an Apache helicopter when he performs a diagnostic check.



A stripped helicopter sits in the 615th Aviation Support Battalion's hangar awaiting a maintenance crew to complete mandatory phased maintenance before it can be put back on the flight line.

"Back in garrison, we might perform a phased maintenance once a year. Here, we've been performing them about every four months."

— Capt. Cecil Nix

Army engineers develop Iraq's infrastructure

Story and photos by
Master Sgt. Jack Gordon
U.S. Army Reserve Command
Public Affairs Acquisition Team

BAGHDAD, Iraq — One of the greatest challenges facing multinational forces is providing tangible evidence that they came not only to remove Saddam Hussein from power but to restore Iraq in a manner that benefits the people who suffered so long under his dictatorship.

A large portion of those visible results includes not only restoring and renovating the power grid, water and sewer systems but developing housing and commerce.

The 1,200 soldiers assigned to the 353rd Engineer Group, from Oklahoma City, Okla., are meeting those challenges. Col. William Hagood commands the unit, and he knows the challenge well. As a civilian, he is senior vice president of a civil engineering and architecture firm.

"We do planning and design work for infrastructure development," said Hagood. "It's very similar to what we're doing here in Iraq." Hagood said

his engineer assets are skilled beyond the norm, and he credits the Army Reserve.

"A lot of active-duty engineer units are considered combat-heavy and are designed to breach obstacles and provide support that closely supports the forward combat-arms units," Hagood said. "In the Reserve, we're more mission oriented to actual construction. I have a lot of Soldiers who work in the construction or engineering field in their civilian occupations, like surveyors, builders, designers, architects and civil engineers, so in this phase of the stability and sustainment operation, we are in demand."

But even with the high civilian-skill crossover apparent in Army Reserve engineer units, the 353rd's two battalions — the 411th from Hawaii and the 98th from Texas — were cross-leveled at about 50 percent of their authorized strengths due to earlier individual and elemental mobilizations from the units.

"As a result," Hagood said, "we have Soldiers from all over the United States, and that includes the 'Pride of the Pacific' units from the 411th, which covers Guam and Western Samoa. I

have a firefighting unit here from Puerto Rico. We have flags displayed in our headquarters representing all the states."

Epitomizing Hagood's assessment of the Army Reserve engineer as a highly skilled Soldier, Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Ice has 15 years managing a construction company. He's "knee-deep" in a building-renovation project at nearby Forward Operating Base Ferrin-Huggins.

"We're working with the Iraqi civilian population here," Ice said. "They're the ones who really know what's wrong and how to fix it. We're just here to help them." Ice noted that a lot of the construction



Army Reserve Soldiers pour concrete for a housing complex renovation managed by the 353rd Engineer Group from Oklahoma City.

work that was being done earlier was fast and cheap — two criteria not known for longevity. The soldiers assigned to the companies of the two battalions, for instance, are fully engaged in the renovation of a series of concrete housing facilities that were hurriedly constructed by the Iraqis.

They were constructed so fast, in fact, that the landfill they are built on was not properly compacted and allowed settlement time. Subsequently, after the buildings went up and weathered the rainy season, the floors gave, breaking all the water systems. The soldiers are now replacing those systems and restoring the buildings, and the Army engineers are also providing input to contracting.

"Sometimes the low bid isn't always the best," Ice said. "We're now looking at all the bids realistically, determining the best contractor for the job and sticking to our guns on quality."

Maj. Curtis Woods is, by civilian trade, the deputy commissioner for public works in Mount Vernon, N.Y., where he oversees the city's water, electric and sanitation operations. Here, his duties are similar.

"I'm working with my Iraqi counterpart," Woods said. "We're trying to systematically identify the problems and develop solutions. It's going to take a while. I see much bigger problems here

than I do at home, but that's going to help me in the long run."

Lt. Col. Doug Satterfield is the chief design engineer for the 453rd. He said he feels his soldiers are gaining more from the deployment than exercising their skill sets and developing new construction in Iraq.

"I'm proud of my Soldiers and what they're doing," Satterfield said. "They will be better people, both in terms of professional skills as well as recognizing what is important in life — not just in their jobs, but in their families and religious lives, too. And the people of Iraq will be better people, too."

"We're here to help the Iraqis get back on their feet and supply essential services so they'll be able to use these facilities in the future," said Hagood. "That's really what we're here for — to provide them with the benefit and knowledge of our experience ... and give them a fresh start."

"I think the Iraqi people are very grateful for the work we're doing with them. It's a new thing they're experiencing — a thing they haven't experienced for generations. To be here working with the 1st Cavalry Division is great. These construction projects are their main focus now, and it's very gratifying for us to be involved. I think it's going to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people ... and I think we'll do it."



An Army Reserve Soldier finishes concrete in a Baghdad, Iraq, housing complex.

Martial-arts class offers change of pace



Petty Officer 1st Class Joel I. Huval, U.S. Navy

The martial-arts mural painted on the exterior wall of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation's CPA Fitness and Recreation Center attracts those interested in practicing oriental forms of exercise.



Petty Officer 1st Class Joel I. Huval, U.S. Navy

1st Lt. Kristina Houtz (left) practices the discipline of taekwon do as a means of exercise and for self defense. The University of Missouri graduate began studying taekwon do as a college senior.

By Sgt. 1st Class
Peter J. Chadwick
Defense Information School

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Folks walking from the International Zone Post Exchange here to the former Presidential Palace may witness a vicious, right-hand cross being delivered to a sparring opponent's jaw every day.

The punch is on display, day or night, because it's frozen in time by an unknown artist.

The martial mural is painted on the off-white stucco exterior of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation's CPA Fitness and Recreation Center attracting those interested in oriental forms of exercise and discipline.

One form offered is the Korean practice of taekwon do.

"I came to the gym, saw the mural outside, got the flier and showed up," said Army Sgt. Jorge R. Paez, a B Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Cavalry Regiment medic from Fort Hood, Texas.

Paez, a Laredo, Texas native, said he lives right across the street from the fitness center and has only missed two classes in a little over a month.

Paez said he started young, around 9 years old. He also participates in aikido and the "sweet science," boxing.

"It's a good alternative to running every day," said Paez. "It's a good aerobic exercise and keeps me young."

The physical-workout aspect was one of the attractions for relative newcomer Army 1st Lt. Kristina Houtz, the executive officer for D Company, 57th

Signal Battalion, also from Hood.

"I've always been athletic," said Houtz, who claims Columbia, Mo., as home.

Up until her senior year at the University of Missouri, her exercise had come from soccer, softball and basketball, said Houtz.

TKD was more than just a way to keep in shape for Houtz.

"I always wanted to be able to defend myself," said Houtz, who learned the American Tae Kwon Do Association style at Missouri.

Instruction at the fitness center is in the World Tae Kwon Do Association style and taught by Grandmaster Sung Bok Nam, an eighth-degree black belt.

Nam has been an instructor since 1960. He has taught in Vietnam, Laos, Thailand Egypt and the United States, according to the MWR flier.

"I am the coach for the Iraqi National Team," said the Korean-born Nam. He said he volunteered to set up the class for the local MWR.

In his 20 years living in the U.S., he was the TKD coach for the 1993 U.S. Olympic team and is the president of the Pennsylvania TKD Association, according to the flier.

The flier seems to have been as instrumental as the mural in getting those serving in the International Zone to participate.

Houtz said the flier prompted her to interrupt her year-long drought and restart her martial arts training.

Sometimes advertising is just old-fashioned word of mouth.

"A guy in the CMO, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Lister,

was taking the classes here and passed the baton to me," said Lt. Col. Lemural Byrd, an educational specialist officer with the 350th Civil Affairs Battalion out of Pensacola, Fla.

Byrd, who works at the Civilian Military Operation Directorate at the former palace, said he started practicing martial arts back home.

The Mobile County, Ga., native said it gave him something to do with his grandchildren.

In addition to the bonding it offers, TKD is good for a cardiovascular workout, general exercise and flexibility, said Byrd.

Byrd said he also appreciates the five principles of TKD: courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control and indomitable spirit.

According to the Minnesota Taekwondo Center Web site, "it is these five qualities of spirit that will keep the martial artist on the mountain of life, regardless of the body's physical limitations the years bring forth. To develop and to cherish these qualities and then to practice them will enable the martial artist to face any and all terrain on the mountain of life where family, work, leisure, friendship and spirituality flow like streams into a lake, running over with water for everything living."

All that, or maybe just give the practitioners a good aerobic exercise or help them to escape the routine of serving far from home.

All interested folks should pass through the door protected by the still-form guardians and ask for an application. The only cost is sweat.



Petty Officer 1st Class Joel I. Huval, U.S. Navy



Petty Officer 1st Class Joel I. Huval, U.S. Navy

Above: Sgt. Jorge R. Paez (right), a combat medic with Company B, 1st battalion, 9th Cavalry regiment, is instructed by Grandmaster Sung Bok Nam, an eighth-degree black belt who coaches the Iraqi National Team. Left: 1st Lt. Kristina Houtz, the executive officer for D company, 57th Signal Battalion, practices a move as her coach, Grandmaster Sung Bok Nam, looks on.